

Message Text

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71

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03

OMB-01 IO-12 RSR-01 INRE-00 /096 W
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P R 160155 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6794

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1592

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASPAC, KS

SUBJECT: ROK EFFORT TO PRESERVE ASPAC

REF: SEOUL 1588

SUMMARY: KOREA IS MOUNTING AN EFFORT TO KEEP ASPAC FUNCTIONING. SENIOR FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL WILL BE DISPATCHED NEXT WEEK TO BANGKOK, SAIGON AND MANILA TO CONSULT ON PROBLEM. JAPANESE COOLNESS TO ORGANIZATION AND ROC UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE TO INCONSPICUOUS POSITION ARE SEEN AS THE TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS. A SUBSTITUTE ORGANIZATION DOES NOT NOW SEEM PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN KIM YONG SHIK CALLED IN CHARGE' TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF ASPAC. KIM' S PURPOSE WAS TO DESCRIBE ACTIONS XE PROPOSED TO TAKTTO KEEP ASPAC A GOING CONCERN. SECONDARY
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PURPOSE WAS TO EXPLORE POSSIBLE WAYS USG MIGHT BE OF ASSISTANCE.

2. FONMIN' S PRESENTATION FOLLOWED LINES OF EARLIER TALK WITH VICE FONMIN REPORTED REFTEL. SUSPICION OF BEHIND- THE- SCENES JAPANESE SABOTAGE WAS REPEATED WITH ADDITIONAL SEPCULATION THAT JAPAN REGARDED MEMBERSHIP IN ASPAC AS NO LONGER CONSISTENT WITH ITS BIG POWER STATUS. KIM SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WISHED TO DO ALL IT COULD TO SUPPORT ASPAC AND THAT HE WAS SENDING HIS ASIAN BUREAU CHIEF, CHI SUNG KOO, TO BANGKOK EARLY NEXT WEEK TO CONSULT WITH THAI OFFICIALS. DEPENDING ON CHI' S FINDINGS THERE, HE MIGHT THEN PROCEED TO SAIGON AND MANILA FOR FURTHER INFORMAL TALKS.

3. ASPAC IN HIS VIEW HAD A FIRM FIVE POWER NUCLEUS MADE UP OF ROK, THAILAND, PHILIPPINES, VIETNAM AND NEW ZEALAND. HE FELT THAT THIS FIVE- NATION CORE WAS WORTH PRESERVING AND IF THE GROUP WAS PREPARED TO KEEP ASPAC GOING, JAPANESE WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE PARTICIPATION.

4. ROC PRESENTED PROBLEM AND HE ALLUDED TO EFFORTS (PREVIOUSLY REPORTED) TO PERSUADE TAIWAN TO EITHER WITHDRAW OR ASSUME INCONSPICUOUS ROLE. SPAC COULD NOT SURVIVE, II HIS JUDGMENT, IF ROC HELD TO ITS PRESENT POSITION. CHARGE' ASKED IF FONMIN WAS CONSIDERING FORMATION OF A SUBSTITUTE BODY SHOULD HIS EFFORTS TO PRESERVE ASPAC FAIL. KIM SMILED RUEFULLY AND SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT A PRACTICAL SOLUTION. " ALL ASIAN LEADERS SEE THEIR CAPITAL CITIES AS JERUSALEM AND THEMSELVES AS THE TRUE PROPHET OF ASIAN REGIONALISM."

5. KIM SAID THAT THE U. S. HAD PLAYED AN IMPORTANT BEHIND- THE- SCENES ROLE IN HELPING ASPAC GET STARTED AND ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING THAT THE U. S. MIGHT DO AT THIS STAGE TO KEEP THE ORGANIZATION ALIVE. CHARGE' EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT NONE OF THE PROBLEMS CURRENTLY FACING ASPAC SEEMS SUSCEPTIBLE TO AN AMERICAN SOLUTION AND THAT MEASURES ROKG ALREADY HAD IN TRAIN SEEMED TO OFFER BEST PROSPECT FOR KEEPING ORGANIZATION GOING. KIM SAID HE TENDED TO SHARE THIS VIEW BUT WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF HIS QUESTION COULD BE RELAYED TO WASHINGTON FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. THIS WE AGREED TO DO.
UNDERHILL

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